

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Wealdstone 1

BERNIE BREMER brought justice and joy to Loakes Park last night (Monday). The ex-Wealdstone striker netted a 91st-minute winner in one of the most bruising, dirty and ill-managed games seen at the ground for many a year, writes **Stuart Earp**.

Up until that goal, Wycombe had been subjected to a barrage of strong arm (and leg) tactics throughout the full 93 minutes.

Wealdstone brought 'boos' and slow handclaps from the crowd from the outset by using an extreme 'offside trap' in which the whole team moved up to the halfway line when the Blues attacked in the first half — thankfully this disappeared in the second.

As a result of this tactic the Wanderers' forwards were repeatedly caught offside—obviously well planned after Wealdstone's 6-1 hammering by Wycombe earlier this season.

Their strategy was hardly good football but nevertheless effective. What, though, was quite inexcusable was their diabolical tackling tactics that accompanied it.

The result of this was that the game went completely out of order. The blame for this must surely rest entirely with referee Mr. R. Finnerty (Thame)—who failed to get a grip on the game at any stage.

Keith Blunt and Rob Williams both had their names taken, the former, in my view, unfairly. Had Mr. Finnerty asserted his authority on the game in the early stages a great deal of the vicious fouls could have been omitted.

No doubt many of the Wanderers' fans were disappointed in seeing Len Worley on the substitute bench—a position he kept throughout the game.

Wycombe had a real chance to take the lead after only four minutes of the game when Anthony drew goalkeeper Thomas and sent across a low centre to Searle, faced with an open goal five yards out. The centre forward, though, spooned the ball high over.

Wealdstone's best reply came when Richie back-headed the ball from a free kick, forcing Kevin O'Brien to make a fingertip save. O'Brien was playing in place of John Maskell, who dislocated his finger against Leytonstone on Saturday.

When Wycombe did evade

the offside trap, they produced some hectic moments in the Stone's defence. John Hutchinson had a header booted off the line by Barnard, and Searle shot just over and wide with two other chances.

Keith Blunt was booked for a niggling nudge on Booth in the 40th minute and it was as well the half-time interval came when it did, for tempers were becoming extremely thin.

Wycombe brought on Tony Horseman for Anthony after 64 minutes to the cheers of the crowd, and many fouls later in the 81st minute Wealdstone took a surprise lead that they hardly deserved. Jeff Booth put them one up after he out-jumped Delaney and O'Brien.

Their joy was short lived, as Delaney walked the ball home for Wanderers' equaliser six minutes later following a Bremer cross.

With Wealdstone's offside trap now non-existent, Wycombe pressed hard, spurred on by their numerous supporters, for the winner. It nearly came when Searle saw his header kicked off the line by Barnard, but it was Bernie Bremer, who until that point had played a poor game, who notched the two points for Wanderers.

In the last movement of the match, Wanderers moved the ball down the right flank. Pritchard beat one man in the Wealdstone box before guiding a pass through for Bremer to ram home a peach of a drive from an acute angle to the jubilation of the crowd.

The supporters cascaded on to the pitch at the end of the game while the referee was given a police escort to the players' tunnel. Wycombe manager, Brian Lee, summed-up the situation ideally after the game by saying "Justice was done".

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: K. O'Brien; P. Fuschillo; K. Blunt; E. Powell; J. Delaney; V. Faulkner; G. Anthony; L. Pritchard; K. Searle; B. Bremer; J. Hutchinson; Sub.: Horseman (for Anthony, 64 mins.)

WEALDSTONE: A. Thomas; T. Mahon; M. Barnard; R. Williams; J. Shufflebotham; G. Olsen; D. Bullock; J. Booth; J. Richie; C. Townsend; J. Wilson; Sub.: L. Worley (not used).

Attendance: 3,050.